REMARKS

Claims 14, 26, 27 and 29-36 are pending in the above-identified application. In the non-final Office Action dated December 18, 2007, the Examiner made the following disposition:

A.) Rejected claims 14, 26, 27, 29-32, 34, and 36 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Hatta, et al. (Hatta)* in view of *JP 01320769 (JP '769)*.

B.) Rejected claims 33 and 35 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Hatta* in view of *JP '769* and further in view of *JP 11140209 (JP '209)*.

C.) Commented on claim to priority.

D.) Claims 14, 26, 27, and 29-36 are otherwise allowable.

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections and addresses the Examiner's disposition below.

A.) Rejection of claims 14, 26, 27, 29-32, 34, and 36 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Hatta, et al. (Hatta)* in view of *JP 01320769 (JP '769)*:

Applicant respectfully disagrees with the rejection.

The present application was filed in the U.S. on December 4, 2003, and claims foreign priority to Japanese application 2000-081860 filed March 17, 2000. Therefore, Applicants' present application has an effective filing date of at least as early as March 17, 2000 based on Japanese application 2000-081860. A certified copy of Applicants' Japanese priority application is of record in the file for the present application. Applicants submit separately herefrom a certified translation of Japanese priority application 2000-081860.

Applicant's present application has an effective filing date of at least as early as March 17, 2000 based on Japanese application 2000-081860. This is prior to *Hatta's* PCT publication date of May 11, 2000. Accordingly, *Hatta* cannot be used as a 35 U.S.C. §102 reference to anticipate Applicants' claimed invention.

Therefore, *Hatta* in view of *JP '769* fails to disclose or suggest claims 14, 26, 27, 29-32, 34, and 36.

Applicants respectfully submit the rejection has been overcome and request that it be withdrawn.

B.) Rejection of claims 33 and 35 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Hatta, et al.* in view of *JP '769* and further in view of *JP 11140209 (JP '209)*:

Applicant respectfully disagrees with the rejection.

The present application was filed in the U.S. on December 4, 2003, and claims foreign priority to Japanese application 2000-081860 filed March 17, 2000. Therefore, Applicants' present application has an effective filing date of at least as early as March 17, 2000 based on Japanese application 2000-081860. A certified copy of Applicants' Japanese priority application is of record in the file for the present application. Applicants submit separately herefrom a certified translation of Japanese priority application 2000-081860.

Applicant's present application has an effective filing date of at least as early as March 17, 2000 based on Japanese application 2000-081860. This is prior to *Hatta's* PCT publication date of May 11, 2000. Accordingly, *Hatta* cannot be used as a 35 U.S.C. §102 reference to anticipate Applicants' claimed invention.

Therefore, *Hatta* in view of *JP '769* and *JP '209* cannot render obvious claims 33 and 35.

Applicant respectfully submits the rejection has been overcome and requests that it be withdrawn.

C.) Comment on claim to priority:

As noted in the specification and declaration, the present application claims priority to Japanese application no. JP 2000-081860. A machine-generated translation has been submitted in this application. Applicant will submit a certified translation separately herefrom.

JP 2000-081860 has a filing date of March 17, 2000. Accordingly, the present application has an effective filing date of March 17, 2000, which precedes *Hatta's* U.S. filing date.

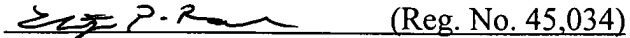
D.) Claims 14, 26, 27, and 29-36 are otherwise allowable:

Applicant respectfully acknowledges the Examiner's finding of allowable subject matter in claims 14, 26, 27, and 29-36. As stated above, these claims are allowable over the cited art.

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections/objections and believes that the claims as presented represent allowable subject matter. If the Examiner desires, applicant welcomes a telephone interview to expedite prosecution and is available at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,



(Reg. No. 45,034)

Christopher P. Rauch
SONNENSCHEIN, NATH & ROSENTHAL LLP
P.O. Box #061080
Wacker Drive Station - Sears Tower
Chicago, IL 60606-1080
Telephone 312/876-2606
Customer #26263
Attorneys for Applicant(s)